

# Roan Mountain bluet

## *Hedyotis purpurea* var. *montana*



Roan Mountain bluet, USFWS

**Status:** Endangered

**Description:** Roan Mountain bluet, found on exposed mountain-top habitat, is easily distinguished from other bluets by its relatively large reddish purple flowers, small oval leaves, and compact growth form. The funnel-shaped flowers blossom from late May through August or September, with peak flowering usually in June and July. The four main flower pollinators are small staphylinid beetles, bumblebees, syrphid flies, and ants. The fruits are small, nearly round, and open in late August through September. Roan Mountain bluet grows about 8" tall.

**Habitat:** Rocky exposures at high elevations of 4,600 to 6,200 feet.

**Range:** Roan Mountain bluet is known from high mountains in North Carolina's Ashe, Avery, Watagua, and Mitchell counties.

**Listing:** Endangered. April 5, 1990. 55 FR 12793 12797

**Critical habitat:** None designated

**Threats:** Threats to Roan Mountain bluet come largely in three forms – commercial, residential, or recreational development at privately owned sites; and trampling of populations at accessible cliff or trail-side locations on public lands.

**Why should we be concerned about the loss of species?** Extinction is a natural process that has been occurring

since long before the appearance of humans. Normally, new species develop through a process known as speciation, at about the same rate other species become extinct. However, because of air and water pollution, forest clearing, loss of wetlands, and other man-induced environmental changes, extinctions are now occurring at a rate that far exceeds the speciation rate.

All living things are part of a complex and interconnected network. We depend on the diversity of plant and animal life for our recreation, nourishment, many of our lifesaving medicines, and the ecological functions they provide. One-quarter of all the prescriptions written in the United States today contain chemicals that were originally discovered in plants and animals. Industry and agriculture are increasingly making use of wild plants, seeking out the remaining wild strain of many common crops, such as wheat and corn, to produce new hybrids that are more resistant to disease, pests, and marginal climatic conditions. Our food crops depend on insects and other animals for pollination.

Healthy forests clean the air and provide oxygen for us to breathe. Wetlands clean water and help minimize the impacts of floods. These services are the foundation of life and

depend on a diversity of plants and animals working in concert. Each time a species disappears, we lose not only those benefits we know it provided but other benefits that we have yet to realize.

### What you can do to help

Tread lightly and stay on designated trails. Vegetation on popular high mountains has virtually been destroyed by human trampling.

Visit arboretums, botanical gardens, and parks and learn all you can about endangered plants and the causes of their declines.

Don't collect or buy plants collected from wild populations.

Participate in the protection of our remaining wild lands and the restoration of damaged ecosystems.

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**December, 2011**

